Employee retention has become an institutional priority as the Great Resignation takes root in higher education. The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) and the TIAA Institute surveyed the full-time higher education workforce in early 2022. This summary, which quantifies potential turnover and relates it to various dimensions of job satisfaction, provides insights to inform retention initiatives.
The Great Resignation takes root in higher education

Up to 40% of the full-time higher ed workforce could job hunt in 2022

Potential for job hunting greatest among employees under age 40

26% likely to seek new employment in 2022

Job hunting correlated with job dissatisfaction

Job satisfaction lowest among those under 40

Only 14% are very satisfied

Compared to other age groups:

40–49: 22%
50–59: 21%
60–plus: 28%
Retaining employees

Almost one half of those likely to job hunt in 2022 say there is nothing their employer could do to change this.

Items cited among those who could be swayed not to look:
- Increased Pay: 47%
- Hybrid/Remote Work Option: 23%
- Increased Benefits: 20%

Salary is job dimension with lowest satisfaction

28% of those under age 40 are dissatisfied with their salary.

38% of those under age 40 who will likely job hunt are dissatisfied with their salary.

Among those under age 40 likely to job hunt:
- 27% find it difficult to make ends meet.
- 33% are significantly debt constrained.
- 22% are not saving for retirement.
- 28% have enough savings to cover one month of living expenses.

Learn more

Visit the TIAA Institute and CUPA-HR websites to find all reports based on the Higher Education Financial Wellness Survey since the project’s inception in 2018.

How can colleges and universities respond?

Focus on helping employees, particularly younger ones, better manage their personal finances. Such initiatives should cover budgeting and cash flow management, including strategies to “free up” money. Initiatives could also involve debt management and retirement planning. A commitment to employee financial well-being sends a strong signal that they are valued.